



## Noncommercial River Use Newsletter

March 23, 2006

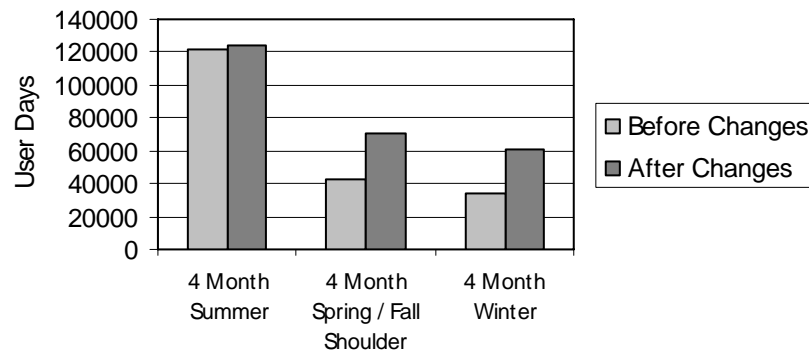
Dear Waitlist Member:

The National Park Service has released a Record of Decision for a revised Colorado River Management Plan. The revised plan changes several aspects of recreational use management of the Colorado River. The changes include increased access for noncommercial boaters and replacing the existing waitlist system with a weighted lottery. The details and latest information can be viewed through our website at [www.nps.gov/grca/crmp](http://www.nps.gov/grca/crmp). Before implementing the new weighted lottery system, we will be implementing a Three Stage Transition process for current waitlist members.

Within this newsletter we will: 1) briefly explain how access for noncommercial boaters will increase; 2) outline the Three Stage Transition process with the timeline for transitioning members out of the waitlist system; 3) estimate how the length of your wait will change, 4) describe how the new weighted lottery will work, and 5) announce a few important rule changes.

### Increased Opportunities for Noncommercial Boaters

In future years, the number of noncommercial launches will increase by 56 in the summer, 102 in the combined spring and fall shoulder season, and 92 in the winter. This is accomplished through increasing summer use by 2%, shortening trip lengths, and spreading out some commercial use into the spring and fall shoulder seasons. The following graph shows how use levels increase.



### Timeline and Process for Transitioning Out of the Waitlist System:

**Stage 1** This newsletter marks the beginning of stage 1. This stage represents the final release of launch dates under the current waitlist system. In this stage people with waitlist numbers between 05#00001 and 05#01500 are being provided with a chance to schedule recent cancellations plus 600 newly released launch opportunities from the 2007 through 2011 calendar years.

Applications from these waitlist members in the top 1500 will be due by May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006. After this date, the applications will be processed in waitlist order. The NPS will consider launch dates listed on each application in the order listed and assign the first available launch date. After processing the top 1500 waitlist applications, the unclaimed launch dates will be made available to other waitlist members through the cancellation line the week of May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006 in accordance with the current cancellation process. Call the River Office toll free cancellation line or check our website [www.nps.gov/grca/river](http://www.nps.gov/grca/river) on the weekend of May 12<sup>th</sup> to find out what dates remain available and when you are eligible to call in and attempt to claim these dates. Stage 1 of the transition will be completed on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Any launch dates throughout the entire 2007 through 2011 timeframe may be requested. In this stage, 120 launches per year are available for a total of 600 launches. They will be awarded according to the following distribution pattern:

120 Launches per Year, 2007-2011 <sup>1</sup>	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Full Size Trip (1 to 16 person)	8	8	11	8	8	8	8	8	11	11	8	8
Half Size Trip (1 to 8 person)				3	3	3	3	3				

Months with 8 full size trips can have no more than 2 trips per week, months with 11 trips can have no more than 3 per week, and half size trips cannot exceed 1 trip per week.

When selecting dates in this stage, current waitlist members should be aware that several dates in early in 2007 have already been scheduled. In addition, some additional launch dates from 2007 through 2009 have also been taken by people with previous launch dates who were granted 3-year deferments. Applicants are encouraged to list on their applications every launch date for which they wish to be considered.

**Stage 2** We hope to begin the next transition stage on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006. In this stage waitlist members will have a five week opportunity to band together and submit applications for an additional 600 launch dates within the 2007 through 2011 calendar years. These launch dates will follow the same distribution pattern listed in stage 1. After the five week period, applications will be due on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Applications will be sorted based on cumulative wait as described below, and the group with the longest cumulative wait time will get first chance at claiming one of the 600 launch dates.

By banding together, waitlist members will advance up the temporary group waitlist to the place of their combined wait. For example, if Tom has been on the waitlist for five years and Robin for nine years, their combined wait will be 14 years, so they could band together and receive a new place on the group waitlist ahead of all those groups who had waited a combined 13 years or less. Waitlist members will be allowed to list themselves as members of only one group, and that group may include many waitlist members. Actual trip size for these groups will be required to stay within the group size limit of 16 people for a standard group launch and 8 people for a small group launch.

Waitlist members interested in stage 2 are encouraged to band together with friends from the waitlist in order to increase their chances of obtaining one of the 600 last launch opportunities distributed through the group waitlist. One resource available is a website forum that the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association created specifically to help waitlist members find each other. The website is [www.gcbpa.org](http://www.gcbpa.org), click on the "Waitlist Number Clearinghouse". We strongly encourage you to ensure your compatibility with any others with whom you are considering banding together. Waitlist members who choose to band together do so at their own risk. All members of groups that are awarded launches lose their place on the waitlist and will receive no other compensation even if they do not participate on the trip.

Group applications may list all launch dates that would be acceptable to the group. On the application due date of June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006, applications will be sorted based on combined group member waitlist time. If groups have the same combined total years wait, the order will be set using the original waitlist order of the member with the longest wait. Applications will then be processed according to the new order for the group waitlist. Any launch dates throughout the entire 5 year time frame may be requested; 600 launches will be awarded according to the distribution pattern listed in stage 1 so long as launch dates are available. We hope to complete transition stage 2 on July 7<sup>th</sup>. If any stage 2 launch dates remain unclaimed through this process, they will be released through the lottery.

**Stage 3** This is the final stage of the transition process. Once the previous stage of the transition is complete, all unsuccessful groups will be dissolved and reinstated as individuals to their original places on the list. At this time each waitlist member will have two options:

1. **Refund:** They can leave the waitlist and accept a refund of the fees they paid for their current spot on the waitlist, or
2. **Extra Chances:** They can leave the waitlist and receive an extra chance in the lottery for each year they had been on the current waitlist. For instance, you joined the waitlist in 1991 and have been on the list 15 years, so **you would get 15 extra chances in the lottery and keep those extra chances each year you apply** until you are awarded a trip or participate in any other noncommercial or commercial trip through any part of the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of the Colorado River. These extra chances will be in addition to the chances normally given to applicants in the lottery (see lottery description on page 3).

**First Lottery** We hope to run the first lottery in August of this year for the remaining calendar year 2007 noncommercial launches. Please visit our website in July for updated information.

### How length of wait changes: increase or decrease?

**Overall Chances** With the new lottery system we predict most of our current waitlist members eventually will go on a trip and experience shorter wait times than they would have if the old system had continued. We believe this to be the case even without further management intervention. However, because the new system is a lottery, some who apply might never win. Of specific concern to the NPS are waitlist members who choose the "extra chances" option in stage 3 of the

transition and apply regularly through the lottery but continue to not win. The National Park Service will monitor their progress and may apply adaptive management measures to ensure their wait times do not excessively increase beyond what they would have waited under the old waitlist and allocation system. As you try for launches through the above transition stages and apply in the lottery each year, we encourage you to compare how you fare against our predictions of how you would have waited if the waitlist system had continued.

**Calculating your wait if the waitlist system had continued** We are mailing each waitlist participant our rough estimations of when, under the old waitlist and allocation system, they would have reached the top 300 on the waitlist and scheduled a launch.

\* These estimates are determined by looking at the last five digits of an individual's waitlist number for each year and duplicating the progress of the person who had that number in 2004 experienced in 2005. These estimates assume that you would not have been one of those who would have fallen off the list for other reasons and that you and all those ahead of you were not waiting for the same small set of acceptable launch dates. For instance, we understand your wait would have been much longer if you and everyone ahead of you on the list were waiting, for example, only for June launch dates; there were only 34 of these released per year to noncommercial boaters.

## **Description of How the New Weighted Lottery will Work**

**When will it take place?** We hope to run the first lottery on the internet in August (2006) and award the remaining noncommercial launches from calendar year 2007. The actual date of the lottery will be posted on our internet site [www.nps.gov/grca/river](http://www.nps.gov/grca/river) at least 30 days before the lottery occurs.

**How can I apply, and what will it cost?** One month prior to the lottery drawing, applicants will be able to enter and track their applications online through a website that the park will soon be developing. There will be a nonrefundable fee of \$25 per application to apply through the lottery.

**Who must be listed on the application?** Lottery applications must list the applicant and all others that the applicant wishes to include as potential alternate trip leaders ("potential leaders"). Other participants need not be listed at this time.

**How will my chances be determined?** If the applicant and all potential leaders listed on their application have not been on the river more recently than 5 calendar years, the application will get 5 chances. If it has been 4 calendar years since any of these people went, the application will get 4 chances. If it has been 3 years, the application will get 3 chances. If it has been 2 years, the application will get 2 chances. Otherwise, the application will get one chance.

In addition, if the applicant was a waitlist member who gave up their place in exchange for extra chances, and since that time has neither won a launch (even as a potential leader) nor been on any portion of a commercial or noncommercial river trip through the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park, the application would get an additional chance for each year the applicant had been on the waitlist.

**How exactly will this work; what will my chances mean?** Once all applications have been entered into the computer program, the following steps will occur until all launch dates have been claimed. First, each applicant's name is listed in a table one time for every chance they get in the lottery. Next the computer will randomly pick an entry from that table. Finally, the computer program will analyze the applicant's top five choices, assigning the first date that is available. At this point all entries for that person will be removed from the table, and another random selection of a name will occur. This process is repeated until the list is exhausted or all launches have been claimed.

If after the above steps any launches remain available, the whole process will be repeated. All applicants who have not been awarded launches will have their names listed in the table one time for every chance they get in the lottery, the computer will randomly pick an entry from that table, the applicant's additional choices (choices 6, 7, 8, etc.) will be considered, and the first date that is available will be assigned. At this point all entries for that person will be removed from the table, and another random selection of a name will occur. This process will be repeated until the list is exhausted or all launches have been claimed. Any remaining dates from this process will be released through the cancellation system described in the following paragraph.

**If cancellations occur, how will those dates be re-released?** For each date listed on the application, the applicant should indicate how late they would be willing to accept a launch date should it become available due to a cancellation. In addition, even after the lottery has been run, new applications will be accepted for people wishing to compete for cancellations should they occur. Thus, when a cancellation occurs the lottery will be re-run for that date and consider only those willing to take the date with the shorter lead time. This will allow cancellations to be re-released as quickly as possible.

## Important Permit System Rule Changes

1. **Fees and Deposits.** Nonrefundable river permit fees will continue to be \$100 per person, due 90 days before launch. However, a portion of this fee (a total of \$400 per standard sized trip (9 to 16 persons) or \$200 per small sized trip (1 to 8 persons)) will now be required immediately when a launch is scheduled. This portion of the fee will be a nonrefundable deposit and used to cover administrative costs related to reserving and managing permits as well as providing information through the River Office. As an example, in reserving a 10 person trip, \$400 will be due at the time the reservation is made and the remaining \$600 will be due 90 days before launch. The grand total remains \$1000 (i.e. \$100 per person). The lottery fee of \$25 per application is separate and will not apply to this total.
2. **One Trip per Year.** Beginning in 2007 all noncommercial users and commercial passengers will be limited to a maximum of 1 trip per year through any portion of the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.
3. **Age requirement for Lottery and Potential Trip Leaders.** Lottery applicants and all potential alternate trip leaders must be 18 years or older by any requested launch date.
4. **Launch dates are final.** Trip leaders will be allowed to launch their trips as originally planned, pass their trips to alternate trip leaders, or cancel. Deferments and/or swapping of launch dates will no longer be allowed. This change is necessary in the new launch-based system to ensure everyone interested in a specific launch date will get their chance to compete for it and not lose out to those who applied for other launch dates in earlier years.
5. **Motorized use season.** Beginning in 2007, the new motor season will start on April 1<sup>st</sup> and last through September 15<sup>th</sup>. Those authorized to launch trips during this timeframe will have the option of using motors. Launches occurring between September 16<sup>th</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup> may not be motorized.
6. **New Maximum Trip Lengths will be in place for all newly released trips and all trips launching on or after January 1, 2007.** The new trip lengths will be as follows:

Summer (May – August)		Number of Days
Noncommercial Motor		12
Noncommercial Oar		16
Shoulder Seasons (March-April/Sept.- October)		
Noncommercial Motor		12
Noncommercial Oar		18 (Sept 1-15), 21 (Remainder of Shoulder Season)
Winter (November – February)		
Noncommercial Motor		N/A
Noncommercial Oar		25

7. **2006 is considered a transition year.** In 2006 launches will only be added to the schedule in places where the new Trips at One Time (TAOT) limits will not be exceeded. For 2006, launches will be released according to the old launch pattern of 8 per week in the primary season, and some additional launches will be released for the secondary season.
8. **New 8 person trips.** Each year from April 1 through August 31 a new, smaller noncommercial trip (1 to 8 persons) will be authorized to launch. For this reason, applicants will be required to indicate on their applications whether or not they wish to be considered for these trips.
9. **Social Security Numbers.** The River Permits Office has received approval to replace the system for tracking users by social security number with a different system that uses dates of birth and other more common information. If you would like to have your social security number removed from our system, please mail us your date of birth, current waitlist number, and full legal name as it appears on your driver's license.

If you have any questions, please call or write the River Permits Office. If necessary we will put together another Frequently Asked Questions publication and make it available on our internet site. Thanks for your patience, and good luck in the new system and throughout the transition.

US Postal Service Mailing Address:	Address for Other Carriers:	Fax:	<b>(928) 638-7844</b>
<b>River Permits Office</b>	<b>River Permits Office</b>	Phone:	<b>(800) 959-9164</b>
<b>P.O. Box 129</b>	<b>#1 Village Loop Road</b>	-or-	<b>(928) 638-7843</b>
<b>Grand Canyon, AZ 86023-0129</b>	<b>Grand Canyon, AZ 86023</b>	Cancellation Line:	<b>(928) 638-7883</b>

# Launch Date Preference Form, Transition Stage 1

\*\*\* Due Before **May 3, 2006** \*\*\*

From:

Waitlist Number:

Only Waitlist Numbers 05#00001 – 05#01500  
May Apply

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
(MM) (DD) (YYYY)

\* Please print clearly your full name and address. If your name as listed on your driver's license is different than what is listed above, please print your driver's license name here:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. (Last Name) (First Name) (MI)

## Launch Dates I request, in order of preference:

I understand I can attach additional sheets and choices as desired. Only the dates I list will be checked, and I will be bypassed for all other dates. I can list any launch dates from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2011. I can also list any of the recently cancelled launch dates for this summer and fall including: **7/6/06, 7/12/06, 7/13/06, 8/2/06, 8/22/06, 8/26/06, 8/29/06, 9/3/06, 9/6/06, 10/13/06, 10/14/06, and 10/15/06.** This list will change as more cancellations occur, please check the website for updates.

## Choices: (please format as month/day/year, e.g. 6/21/07)

# 1: _____	# 9: _____	# 17: _____	# 25: _____
# 2: _____	# 10: _____	# 18: _____	# 26: _____
# 3: _____	# 11: _____	# 19: _____	# 27: _____
# 4: _____	# 12: _____	# 20: _____	# 28: _____
# 5: _____	# 13: _____	# 21: _____	# 29: _____
# 6: _____	# 14: _____	# 22: _____	# 30: _____
# 7: _____	# 15: _____	# 23: _____	# 31: _____
# 8: _____	# 16: _____	# 24: _____	# 32: _____



☐ **I do not wish to schedule.** \*\* Note: This is Stage 1 of a transition that will replace the waitlist with a Weighted Lottery. **This is your last chance to apply through the waitlist** and under the current system. (Please read this newsletter for more information.) We suggest taking advantage of this chance to schedule.

## Potential Alternate Trip Leaders:

*Important: Trips may not be deferred. Listing potential alternate trip leaders here is a way of ensuring that if something comes up and you cannot go on this trip, someone else (one of the people you list here) can take over the trip and allow it to continue as originally planned. **This is your last chance to list anyone as a potential alternate trip leader for your trip.** If you cannot go and nobody is listed here or none of those listed below agree to take over the trip, the trip will be cancelled. Potential alternate trip leaders must be at least 18 years old before the launch and have not been on the river during the same year as the launch. Only complete entries are accepted, and more than three names can be listed. Please enter the names on this list in your preferred order of succession.*

**Legal Name from Driver's License:**

**Date of Birth:** ( mm / dd / yyyy )

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

This form may be sent to the River Office by FAX (928-638-7844) or by certified mail with return receipt to obtain proof of timely submittal. Please do not send self-addressed, stamped envelopes. **Thanks!**